

980 REHABILITATION

981 WILDFIRE REHABILITATION POLICY

A. OBJECTIVE

The objective of fire rehabilitation is to provide for prompt action following wildfire and associated fire suppression activities to minimize, to the extent that is practical:

1. Loss of soil and on-site productivity.
2. Deterioration of water quality and adverse change in runoff characteristics.
3. Threats to life and property, both on-site and off-site.

B. FIRE REHABILITATION LIMITATIONS

1. Necessary to protect soil and water resources from loss or unacceptable downstream damage.
2. Effective and feasible to install or apply before the season of anticipated greatest impact.
3. Environmentally and socially acceptable and compatible with current and long-term land use.

C. RESPONSIBILITY

1. The appropriate Area Manager is responsible for implementing the fire rehabilitation policy on areas of DNRC direct fire protection and State/County Cooperative Fire Protection responsibility and **assisting counties where applicable during county assistance situations.**
2. The Incident Commander is directly responsible for recognizing the need for rehabilitation of the fire area and suppression-caused damages, and is responsible for implementing this policy.

D. DEFINITIONS

1. **Type 1 Damages**--(Fire Suppression Rehabilitation) Physical damages resulting from fire suppression activities.
2. **Type 2 Damages**--(Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation) Physical damages caused by the fire itself, not including the impacts of suppression activities.

3. **Project Supervisor**--The person assigned by the Area Manager to provide direct supervision for implementation of funded Type 2 rehabilitation recommendations. This person's involvement will not terminate until all rehabilitation measures have been implemented.
4. **Rehabilitation Specialist**--A technical specialist position in the Planning Section filled when requested by the Incident Commander/Planning Section Chief. This person completes a preliminary Burned Area Survey, reporting on suppression-caused damages and the need for a Rehabilitation Team.
5. **Rehabilitation Team Leader**--A position filled when the need for rehabilitation of Type 2 damages has been identified. This person leads an interdisciplinary team responsible for assessing Type 2 damages and recommending functional, cost- effective rehabilitation measures.
6. **Watershed Emergency**--A watershed emergency exists when a natural occurrence causes a sudden impairment of a watershed that creates an imminent threat to life or property.
7. **Preliminary Burned Area Survey**--An assessment made by the rehabilitation specialist of suppression-caused damages (Type 1) and the need for rehabilitation of Type 2 damages.
8. **Burned Area Survey**--An assessment made by the specialist or rehabilitation team that locates and identifies watershed emergencies and treatment measures.

E. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

1. Most DNRC direct protection and State/County Cooperative Fire Protection involves areas of mixed ownership. To increase the efficiency of fire rehabilitation efforts, DNRC will encourage coordination of fire rehabilitation efforts by promoting interagency standards and operating procedures. In addition, where private property is involved in the rehabilitation plan, a landowner briefing should be conducted that includes the County Weed Supervisor and local extension agent for noxious weed and rehabilitation exchange.
2. The document "Interagency Emergency Watershed Rehabilitation Procedures" will "provide effective interagency coordination for the development of assessments, plans and implementation of actions for rehabilitating lands and resources damaged by wildfire, flood or other natural event."

F. REHABILITATION OF PHYSICAL DAMAGES (TYPE 1)

Rehabilitation of physical damages **resulting from the fire suppression effort** (Type 1 damages) on DNRC direct fire protection is as follows:

1. **Application**

- a. Rehabilitation of suppression-caused damage (Type 1) is applicable to wildfire of all sizes on all ownerships within DNRC direct protection and State/County Cooperative Fire Protection.
- b. For other than emergency measures, landowners will be consulted prior to implementing rehabilitation measures.
- c. Rehabilitation of Type 1 damages is a part of the suppression effort, and should be completed before demobilization on DNRC direct protection and State/County Cooperative Fire Protection fires.

2. **Typical Rehabilitation Measures**

- a. Construction of waterbars in firelines.
- b. Removal of berm along dozer-constructed firelines.
- c. Grass seeding and fertilizing of firelines and fire camp area.

3. **Funding**

Costs incurred are charged directly to the fire where the measures are being incorporated on direct protection and State/County Cooperative Protection fires.

G. REHABILITATION OF PHYSICAL DAMAGES (TYPE 2)

Rehabilitation of physical damages **caused by the fire itself** (Type 2--not suppression-caused damages) on DNRC direct fire protection and State/County Cooperative Protection is as follows:

1. **Application**

- a. Rehabilitation of Type 2 damages may be applicable where one or more of the following conditions are met:
 - 1) A watershed emergency exists.
 - 2) Affected landowners have a legal interest or responsibility for the values threatened.

- 3) Conditions of appropriate funding sources such as Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) are met and funds are available. DNRC will not be responsible for funding Type 2 rehabilitation.
- b. Rehabilitation of Type 2 damages is subject to the availability of funds. Fire suppression funds are **not** available for Type 2 damages.
- c. Physical damages caused by suppression activities are **not** eligible for rehabilitation as Type 2 damages.
- d. Landowners will be consulted before rehabilitation of Type 2 damages is started.
- e. Rehabilitation of Type 2 damages on federal lands is the responsibility of the appropriate federal agency.

2. **Typical Rehabilitation Measures**

- a. Grass seed and fertilize intensely burned areas.
- b. Removal of downed woody debris from stream channels.
- c. Installation of trash racks in streams.
- d. Installation of log erosion barriers.

3. **Possible Funding Sources**

- a. Natural Resources Conservation Service Emergency Watershed Protection Program funds and Farm service Agency program funds.
- b. DNRC Resource Development Funds (**state land only**).
- c. DNRC operating budget (**state land only**).
- d. Funding for rehabilitation of Type 2 damages on federal land is the responsibility of the appropriate federal agency.

H. REHABILITATION OF TYPE 1 AND TYPE 2 DAMAGES ON STATE-ASSISTED COUNTY FIRES

1. **Responsibility**

- a. Rehabilitation of Type 1 and Type 2 damages is the responsibility of the affected county. DNRC will assist the county with Type 1 rehabilitation.
- b. DNRC ownership involved in county-assisted fires may be treated with rehabilitation measures similar to those under direct suppression. The source of funds will be **other than fire suppression**, such as Resource Development.

2. **Cooperation**

A Rehabilitation Specialist and burn area survey team will be available as needed and requested to make recommendations on county fires for the entire fire or on DNRC ownership only.

I. NOXIOUS WEED PREVENTION

- 1. All grass seed to be applied for rehabilitation purposes must be certified noxious weed free. A copy of seed tags showing seed composition will be retained to indicate noxious weed-free seed was applied.
- 2. Rehabilitation recommendations should consider measures which minimize potential for weed introduction and spread. Examples include the use of weed-free straw bales where erosion control sediment traps are used; wash wheeled or tracked equipment if suspected of transporting weeds.
- 3. When planning rehabilitation of Type 2 damages, take steps to minimize weed introduction and spread.
 - a. Identify areas where weeds previously occurred. In areas where spread of weeds is a concern, county weed boards may be able to supply information and maps on where noxious weeds occur in the fire area.
 - b. Consider landowner objectives and resources for weed control. The landowner will be responsible for weed management on their ownership.

SPECIAL NOTE: ALL FIRE SUPPRESSION EQUIPMENT, FIRE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT AND OFF-ROAD VEHICLES WILL BE VISUALLY INSPECTED AND WASHED IF NEEDED TO

REMOVE NOXIOUS WEED SEEDS. THIS INSPECTION SHOULD BE PART OF THE VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTION CHECKLIST (OF-296) COMPLETED ON ALL VEHICLES PRIOR TO AND AFTER INCIDENT ASSIGNMENTS.

J. BURNED AREA SURVEY

1. **Implementation**

- a. A Rehabilitation Specialist will be mobilized as needed to conduct a preliminary burned area survey for DNRC direct protection and State/County Cooperative Fire Protection fires.
 - 1) Criteria for the Incident Commander to use in determining when to request a Rehabilitation Specialist are:
 - Size of Fire
 - Fuel Types and Loading (e.g., Grass and Shrub vs. Timber)
 - Intensity of Burn
 - Proximity to Stream Courses
 - Steepness of Slope and Erosivity of Soils
 - Downstream Water Uses (e.g., Municipal/High Value Fishery vs. In-Stream Stock Water)
 - Extent of Suppression Activities.
- b. The Rehabilitation Specialist is a technical specialist in the Planning Section.
- c. The Rehabilitation Specialist will review the fire and make recommendations on:
 - 1) Extent and rehabilitation of Type 1 (suppression-caused) damages.
 - 2) Occurrence of Type 2 (fire-caused) damages and the need for a rehabilitation team and a burned area survey.
- d. On fires where a Rehabilitation Specialist is not called, rehabilitation of Type 1 and Type 2 damages will remain the direct responsibility of the Incident Commander.

2. **Type 1 Damages**

- a. For fires with no significant Type 1 damages, the Rehabilitation Specialist is released at containment or before.

- b. For fires with Type 1 damages:
- 1) The Rehabilitation Specialist reviews the fire and prepares a report with rehabilitation recommendations.
 - 2) The report submitted to the Planning Section Chief will consist of written memos and detailed maps.
 - 3) Prompt reporting is essential in order to utilize equipment and manpower still on the fire. Interim reports are encouraged to better utilize available resources.
 - 4) The final report prescribing rehabilitation measures will be completed within one day after containment of the fire.
 - 5) The final rehabilitation plan will include all the cost and a timeline for the completion of work outline in the plan. All financial obligations will be completed prior to the closeout of the incident.
 - 6) Upon approval of the rehabilitation plan by the Incident Commander, the Rehabilitation Specialist supervises completion of rehabilitation measures.

3. **Type 2 Damages**

- a. BAER Team Organization--A burn area emergency rehabilitation (BAER) team is mobilized to complete the burn area survey and report only after the Rehabilitation Specialist has identified potential for Type 2 damages, and the Area Manager has reviewed the need for mobilization.

1) **Skills Needed**

The makeup of the Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) Team will vary with the size and intensity of burn, the topography and the land use. The following disciplines are a sample of those that may be utilized:

Team Leader
Soil Scientist
Hydrologist
Geologist
Plant Materials Specialist
Range Specialist
Reforestation Specialist

Fish and/or Wildlife Biologist
Economist
Land Office Liaison
Clerical Support

- 2) The Rehabilitation Specialist will be reassigned to the BAER Team. He/she may be a Team Leader or a Team Member, depending on qualifications and needs. He/she will maintain responsibility for supervising the quality and location of Type 1 damage rehabilitation measures. The Operations Section actually carries out the recommended measures.

3) **Selection of Teams**

- a) The BAER Team may be formed at the Area or Department level, or interagency, depending on the need and location of available skills.
- b) The Trust Lands Management Division Administrator shall select potential DNRC team members and alternates with the needed skills from within the department prior to fire season.
- c) Team Leaders and members will be notified prior to the fire season.

4) **Position in the Overhead Structure**

- a) The Team Leader will be responsible to the Planning Section Chief.
- b) Team members will be responsible to the Team Leader.
- c) The Rehabilitation Specialist will be assigned to the BAER Team.
- d) Pre-Season Planning: A pre-season planning meeting may be held as needed to discuss responsibilities and operations matters.

b. Burned Area Survey Report and Prescriptions

1) **Type 2 Damages**

- a) In an effort to promote interagency cooperation, the definitions, guidelines, and cost effectiveness analysis in Chapters 20 - 40 (2-4) of the USFS

Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation Handbook (FSH 2509.13), will be used as a starting point. The subject areas of the three chapters are Chapter 20-- Burned Area Survey & Prescription; Chapter 30-- Cost Effectiveness Analysis; and Chapter 40-- Burned Area Report.

- b) The Burned Area Survey Report will be completed within three days of control of the fire.
- c) The rehabilitation measures will be completed under the direct supervision of the Project Supervisor, appointed by the Area Manager, in coordination with the Rehabilitation Team Leader. The Project Supervisor will be involved until implementation of rehabilitation measures is complete.

K. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 1. A field review and evaluation of rehabilitation efforts will be completed following one growing season. The evaluation will be coordinated between the Area Manager and the Rehabilitation Specialist and/or the BAER Team Leader. Additional field reviews in subsequent years may be desired.
- 2. Results and recommendations will be documented and submitted to the Area Manager.

L. RECOMMENDED QUALIFICATIONS

The minimum fire safety knowledge and skills (training) and fitness standards for BAER incident management team personnel to safely work independently on an uncontrolled wildland fire incident are the knowledge and skills found in Introduction to ICS and I 200. In addition, Standards for Survival and a light fitness level are required.

1. **Rehabilitation Specialist**

- a. Successful completion of RX-310 Introduction to Fire Effects training course.
- b. Successful completion of S-190, S-290 & S-390, Fire Behavior training course.
- c. Successful completion of I-100, Introduction to ICS and I-200, Basic Incident Command.
- d. Substantial knowledge in the areas of:

- 1) Fire effects on soil, water, and plant communities.
- 2) Soil erosion, sedimentation and water quality impacts.
- 3) Basic wildfire suppression tactics.
- 4) Rehabilitation techniques and equipment use.

2. **BAER Team Leader**

- a. Successful completion of RX-310, Introduction to Fire Effects training course.
- b. Successful completion of S-190, S-290 & S-390, Fire Behavior training course.
- c. Successful completion of I-100, Introduction to ICS and I-200, Basic Incident Command.
- d. Knowledgeable in basic wildfire suppression tactics.
- e. Ability to supervise agency and interagency subordinates in accomplishing the most effective and economic job.
- f. Working knowledge of all cooperating agency land and fire management policies.
- g. Ability to complete a cost effectiveness analysis considering the economic, environmental and social benefits of various alternatives.
- h. Substantial knowledge of rehabilitation techniques and equipment use.

982 PRE-REHABILITATION POLICY GUIDE

If the I.C. or Planning Section Chief recognizes a need for rehabilitation measures, the Technical Specialist position in the Planning Section is filled with a Rehabilitation Specialist.

The Technical (Rehabilitation) Specialist reviews the fire.

- A. The Technical (Rehabilitation) Specialist reviews the fire for one of the following scenarios:
 1. Rehabilitation Specialist finds **no** significant fire-caused **Type 2 Damages** and **no** significant **Type 1 Damages** caused by fire

suppression actions. **THEN**, the Rehabilitation Specialist demobs at the containment of the fire or before.

2. Rehabilitation **finds** significant **Type 1 Damages** caused by fire suppression actions.
 - a. Rehabilitation Specialist calls for assistance as needed depending on fire size, land use, etc.
 - b. Rehabilitation Specialist prepares report with rehabilitation recommendations within 1 day after containment of the fire.
 - c. I.C. goes over the rehabilitation recommendation and decides whether or not to authorize rehabilitation activities.
 - 1) The I.C. decides **no**.
 - a) Revise rehabilitation plan.
 - 2) The I.C. decides **Yes**.
 - a) Rehabilitation Specialist supervises completion of rehabilitation.
 - b) Rehabilitation measures completed or contracted to be completed before incident is returned to local unit.
3. The Rehabilitation Specialist **finds** significant **fire-caused Type 2 Damages**.
 - a. Call Rehabilitation Team.
 - b. Team Leader coordinates with Rehabilitation Specialist on Type 2 (and Type 1, if existing) damages.
 - c. Rehabilitation Specialist incorporated into Rehabilitation Team.
 - d. Rehabilitation Team completes Burned Area Survey.
 - e. Rehabilitation Team completes report and prescriptions within 3 days of control of the fire and submit them to the Planning Section Chief.
 - f. Area Manager decides whether or not to approve the rehabilitation plan.

- 1) The Area Manager decides **no**.
 - a) Revise rehabilitation plan.
- 2) The Area Manager decides **yes**.
 - a) Team Leader coordinates rehabilitation with project supervisor.
 - b) Rehabilitation measures completed or contracted to be completed before incident is returned to local unit.

983 AVAILABLE LANDOWNER REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

The following assistance programs or methods may be available to landowners who have lost fences, cattle, hay, pasture, etc., from fire. Landowners should make their initial contact with their local conservation district. Conservation districts are organized statewide, often following county boundaries. There are 60 conservation districts in Montana, and all have working mutual agreements with the United States Department of Agriculture and the State of Montana. The Montana Association of Conservation Districts office is located in Helena.

- A. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is now part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and other federal agencies offer disaster assistance in several forms. This assistance is available following a Governor's emergency or disaster declaration and a request for a Presidential declaration. If the President approves the request and declares a "Major Disaster," then federal assistance is in the form of low interest loans to cover damages. The Farm Service Agency (FSA), U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Small business Administration (SBA) offer low interest loans to eligible individuals, farmers and businesses to repair or replace damage property and personal belongings not covered by insurance. This assistance is different than the Fire management Assistance Grant Program (FMAGP), which does **not** require a Governor's emergency or disaster declaration but **does** require the State's request for a fire management assistance declaration be approved by FEMA.
- B. FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA) PROGRAM AVAILABLE UNDER SECRETARIAL DECLARATION (USDA Secretary of Agriculture).

Following a request by the county commissioners submitted through, and supported by the Governor, the state must be declared a disaster area by the USDA Secretary of Agriculture. When the disaster is declared by the Secretary of Agriculture, the designation makes farmers and ranchers eligible for FSA emergency farm loans if they have losses caused by the declared disaster in the crop year of the year the disaster was declared. The losses cannot be determined until harvest time. The disaster

declaration by the Secretary of Agriculture does not trigger other farm programs administered by FSA.

C. FARM SERVICE AGENCY PROGRAMS AVAILABLE DUE TO NATURAL DISASTERS.

The USDA Farm Service Agency provides special programs such as the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), which provides emergency funding to agricultural producers who have suffered severe damage to their farmland as a result of natural disaster. These disasters may include flooding, fire, drought, etc. Local FSA county committees, with concurrence by the FSA state committee and approval by the National FSA office, are authorized to implement ECP funding for eligible producers within their specific county. Other programs such as the Livestock Assistance Program (LAP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) are ad hoc programs implemented by Congress and are available in emergency situations when funding is available.

D. NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) has the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) available for local sponsors to use to aid in recovery work. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical and financial assistance to install measures that reduce post-fire damage. The measures are intended to reduce threats to life or property, retard runoff, restore capacity of waterways, prevent flooding and/or soil erosion, and reduce damage from sediment and debris. The removal of debris deposited by the disaster that is a health or safety hazard can be a part of such measures as well. In addition to the EWP program, NRCS offers conservation information and expertise to individual homeowners or landowners seeking technical assistance in their rehabilitation efforts.

E. MONTANA DNRC FIRE REHABILITATION SERVICES

1. **Service Forestry Bureau Programs**

a. Forest Practices

- 1) Slash
- 2) Streamside Management Zones (SMZ)
- 3) Best Management Practices (BMP)

b. Forest Health

- 1) Entomologist
- 2) Insect and disease

c. Tree Seedling Nursery

d. Community Forestry

- e. Forest Stewardship Program
 - 1) Education
 - 2) Cost Share
- f. Private Forestry Assistance
 - 1) Non-Industrial Private Forest Landowners (NIPF)

2. **What DNRC Can Do SPECIFICALLY**

- a. On the ground technical assistance.
 - 1) Half-day Visit
 - a) Assess fire impacts.
 - b) Provide mitigation recommendations.
 - c) Help with timber salvage.
- b. Entomologist
 - 1) On site visit.
 - 2) Identify potential post fire insect problems and mitigation.
- c. DNRC State Nursery
 - 1) Provide conifer seedlings for spring planting.
- d. Cost-Share Assistance
 - 1) Forest Land Enhancement Program
 - 2) 75/25 Cost-Share
 - 3) Forest Rehabilitation
 - a) Focus on Erosion, SMZs and BMPs

Contact Your Local Service Forester

DNRC Service Forestry Web Site:

www.dnrc.mt.gov/forestry/assistance